

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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Hilchos Chol Hamoed

May one vacuum carpets on Chol Hamoed?

Before discussing the use of vacuum cleaners, we ought to first consider whether it is at all permitted to dust clothing and carpets on *Chol Hamoed*. The answer is that dusting on Shabbos is a *machlokes Rishonim* and although we are stringent on Shabbos and do not dust clothing,¹ on *Chol Hamoed* it is permitted.² Consequently one may vacuum carpets (when dirty) on *Chol Hamoed* with a vacuum cleaner. The *poskim* write that one should not do irregular cleaning. For example, one should not hang the carpet over the railing and bang it, (a common Israeli practice) because it is not done regularly and degrades the Yom Tov.³

May one dust one's hat on Chol Hamoed?

Because a hat does get dusty regularly, dusting it is not included in the prohibition of laundering.⁴

What about shining shoes?

The *Chazon Ish* was stringent with respect to shining shoes on *Chol Hamoed*⁵ but the majority of *poskim* permit it.⁶ The basic argument is that since shoes get dirty all the time they are similar to hand towels, which may be laundered on *Chol Hamoed*, as they are constantly needed and

constantly become soiled. Rav Sternbuch *shlita* adds that one may clean and shine shoes but "should avoid making them like new".⁷

May a Jewish char work regularly on Chol Hamoed?

If the Jewish char requires a salary for daily expenses, the char may work and receive a normal salary.⁸ We will see the basis for this *heter* later. If the char does not require funds for basic living and has sufficient funds for all Yom Tov needs, one should ask if it is acceptable to be paid for the *Chol Hamoed* salary together with the period before or after Yom Tov, a concept called *בhbilua* – together with another payment. If the char does not agree, some are of the opinion that he/she may get paid as normal.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach adds⁹ that a permanent char may work and receive a regular salary on *Chol Hamoed*, because the person is part of the household and the upkeep of the house is his/her responsibility (This obviously refers to work permitted on *Chol Hamoed*). It is only when one hires household help particularly for *Chol Hamoed* that one must find a way to pay *בhbilua*.

To summarize

If the money is needed for basic living – one may pay as normal.

If it is not needed for basic needs – the person should be paid *בhbilua*.

¹ *Simon* 302:1.

² Provided it is done regularly and not intensive cleaning.

³ *SS"K* 66:47 and footnote 184.

⁴ *SS"K* 66:74.

⁵ *SS"K* 66 footnote 185.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Moadim Uzmanim* vol. VII *simon* 154.

⁸ *SS"K* 66:50.

⁹ *Tikunim umilu'im* 66 footnote 164.

If the char disagrees, some say that payment may be as normal.¹⁰

A permanent char may receive a salary on *Chol Hamoed*.

What is the whole problem about paying a worker if the work is permitted on Chol Hamoed?

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that even work permitted on *Chol Hamoed* may be performed either for one's own benefit or for the benefit of others for free; but one may not be paid.¹¹ The *Mishna Berura*¹² cites the *Rosh* saying it is because it is an *uvda d'chol* (a weekday activity) to pay for work done on *Chol Hamoed*. *Chazal* decided what is considered an *uvda d'chol* and what is not and it is not something for us to question or invent. We will *b'ezras Hashem* see more of this later.

May one sew a button or repair a tear in one's clothing?

One may sew an essential button onto clothing needed for *Chol Hamoed* and one may mend clothing needed for *Chol Hamoed*. However, a person deft in sewing must sew in an irregular manner, which means the stitching must be crooked and uneven.¹³ One who is not deft in the art of sewing may sew in the normal manner, as the outcome will be uneven. The shinui must be in the end result and not in the sewing method, i.e. it will not help to hold the needle in an irregular manner.¹⁴

Others hold that whether or not one is skilled one should sew in an irregular fashion, because most people can to some extent¹⁵ sew nicely.

A child's clothing tore but he does not care what the clothes look like, may it be repaired?

¹⁰ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach questions this *heter* in *SS"K* 66 footnote 164.

¹¹ *Simon* 542:1.

¹² *Simon* 542:2.

¹³ See *simon* 541:5.

¹⁴ *Rama simon* 541:5.

¹⁵ *SS"K* 66:51 based on *simon* 541:4,5 and *M"B* there.

Even though the child wearing the clothing does not care for its appearance, the clothes may be mended for his parent's sake. The basis for this *heter* is that for dignity one may perform *melachos* in a simple fashion on *Chol Hamoed*. Since the child's parents prefer not to appear in public with their child wearing torn clothing or buttons missing, they may mend the clothing, albeit with a *shinui*, as mentioned.¹⁶

Vort on the Parsha

Chazal tell us that *B'nei Yisroel* were required to donate three times to the *Mishkan*. Twice was obligatory - for the *adanim* (the -sockets) and for the *korbanos*. The third for the *Mishkan*'s utensils - was voluntary.

The third donation was to create the medium into which *Hashem* was to dwell. Donating towards such a high and lofty phenomenon cannot be obligatory or forced; it must come from deep within one's understanding and appreciation.

The commentators say that *Betzalel* knew how sincere each person was and accordingly his donation went to a holier place in the *Mishkan*.

Food For Thought

May one mend torn shoes on Chol Hamoed?

What about repairing a broken window on Chol Hamoed?

Which writing is permitted on Chol Hamoed and which is not?

May one use a computer on Chol Hamoed?

Answers coming be" H next week .

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¹⁶ Rav Shlomo Zalman, as cited in *SS"K* 66 footnotes 173 and 194.

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive *p'sak*.